

Filed for intro on 02/07/2002

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 680  
By Hagood

A RESOLUTION to commend and honor William Edward Hooper, Tennessee broadcaster and journalist, for laudable service to the people of Tennessee and the United States by officially designating him Bard Laureate of the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Tennessee has a long history forged by the efforts of her sons and daughters whose extraordinary lives have made significant impressions in the account of our common life as a people, state and nation, which lives are worthy of documenting for future generations; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those persons who through their heroic actions and professional efforts have distinguished themselves as national, state, and community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is William Edward Hooper, who as a broadcaster and journalist in the State of Tennessee has made an indelible mark upon his profession and the people of this state and our nation; and

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WHEREAS, William Edward Hooper was born on March 10, 1964 at McDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida to Knox County natives Dennis William and Doris Jean Hooper; the family returned to Knoxville following Dennis Hooper's retirement from the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, William Edward (Ed) Hooper grew up in Knox County, attending Corryton Elementary and graduating from Gibbs High School; he later attended the University of Tennessee and graduated from the Professional Academy of Broadcasting; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper was first employed as a broadcaster at Knoxville Transit; he was a traffic reporter and also used his personal time to document the lives of notable Tennesseans in his syndicated broadcast program "Radio Appalachia," which was carried on 21 stations in East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper served as host of the syndicated Knoxville Bicentennial radio program "Celebrate Knoxville," which was carried on fifteen radio stations and featured stories on the City's past; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper was host of the WKXT-TV's "Tennessee Bicentennial Moments," documenting stories of the state's historic past; during his research for the series, he discovered numerous unmarked and neglected graves of Tennessee's Congressional Medal of Honor recipients; and

WHEREAS, although possessing limited resources, he assumed the expense of ensuring that the graves of the Medal of Honor recipients were properly decorated and honored, and spent countless hours collecting numerous private and government held documents documenting the stories of the Tennesseans who have received the nation's highest award; he deposited the records in the National Medal of Honor Museum of Military History in Chattanooga, where his efforts earned him an appointment to the Museum's Board of Trustees, making him one of the Board's youngest members ever; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper assisted in the efforts to preserve Shiloh National Military Battlefield Park from erosion caused by the Tennessee River; he helped forge a coalition of Native American tribes and representatives of the John Ingram Camp Sons of Confederate Veterans to lobby for increased attention to the Park's erosion problems; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper created the nonprofit Tennessee On-line Internet site for the South Foundation, Inc. to serve as a teaching tool and news source addressing Tennessee historic preservation efforts; the site has assisted more than 10,000 students and scholars from around the world who are studying the rich and historic past of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper is a freelance writer documenting notable sons and daughters of Tennessee and covering historic preservation efforts in the state for various regional magazines and newspapers across the South; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper has written and hosted pioneering documentaries on the lives of numerous Tennessee minorities who served this state and nation with distinction; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper has served as a public speaker for community organizations, military groups, churches and public schools on Tennessee's history, coordinating and organizing numerous exhibits on the state's rich military heritage; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper worked as a staff writer and news editor for the *Tennessee Star Journal* and created the "Looking Back" column on Tennessee history; his full-page writings have been preserved in numerous museums across Tennessee and the nation; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper has been repeatedly recognized by "Who's Who in America" and "Who's Who in the South"; he has received more than forty awards for his broadcasting and journalistic efforts, including numerous honors from the Society of Professional Journalists, Tennessee Historical Commission, East Tennessee Historical Society, Tennessee Press Association, City of Knoxville, Knox County Commission, Native American Indian Movement, and Tennessee Sons of Confederate Veterans; and

WHEREAS, Ed Hooper has assisted members of this General Assembly and United States Congressmen in drafting legislation honoring Tennessee's Congressional Medal of Honor recipients and notable veterans; and

WHEREAS, on August 15, 2001, Ed Hooper received the highest civilian military honor conferred by the United States of America when he was awarded the United States Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service; Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld presented the award, which recognized Mr. Hooper for his efforts as a broadcaster and journalist in documenting and preserving Tennessee's rich military past; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of this outstanding broadcaster, journalist and courageous human being and to applaud him for his dedication to his country and his state; and

WHEREAS, the ancient title of Bard Laureate is bestowed only upon those rare patriotic individuals who, at great personal expense, devote their careers and lives to the documentation and preservation of the stories of a state's soldiers and their families and historic places; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend William Edward Hooper for his heroic and outstanding service to the United States of America and the State of Tennessee in documenting, preserving, and detailing the rich military legacy that has earned Tennessee the apt title of the "Volunteer State."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we confer upon Mr. Hooper the title of Bard Laureate of the State of Tennessee, and extend to him best wishes for continued health and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.